

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01 /080 W
-----231451Z 092365 /43

R 230618Z APR 77
FM AMEBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3624
INFO AMCONGEN ASMARA
AMEMBASSY CIARO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMBASSY MOGADISCIO 4788
AMEMBASSY SANA
UN MISSION USUN NY 2011

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 2445

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ET PFOR SU
SUBJ: EPMG INTENTION RE SUDAN

RE: KHARTOUM 1273, KHARTOUM 1344

1. EMBASSY NOTES THAT IN RECENT CABLES (REFTELS),
POSSIBILITY OF EPMG-BASED AGRESSION AGAINST SUDAN HAS BEEN
RAISED. PURPOSE OF THIS CABLE IS TO SUMMARIZE RECENT ACTIONS HERE
WHICH APPEAR TO INDICATE MOVE TOWARDS EXPANDED MILI-
TARY OPERATIONS IN GONDAR AREA AND TO ASSESS IN GENERAL TERMS
EPMG SHORT-TERM MILITARY CAPABILITIES.

2. WE BELIEVE EPMG IS CURRENTLY NOT IN POSITION TO
GREATLY EXPAND MILITARY OPERATIONS WITHOUT ENDANGERING ITS
POSITIONS ELSEWHERE. IT IS UNLIKELY EPMG COULD TRANSFER ANY BUT
SMALL NUMBER OF TROOPS FROM ERITREA IN VIEW IMPENDING SIEGE OF
KEREN AND STATUS OF TROOPS IN TESSENAYE AND ELESEWHERE IN ERITREA.
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IN SOUTHEAST EPMG CONTROL COVER LOWLANDS IS MINIMAL, AND NAY
FURTHER REDUCTIONS IN TROOP STRENGTH WOULD RESULT IN EVEN GREATER
LOSS OF CONTROL TO SOMALI-BACKED INSURGENTS. IN ADDITION , 3RD
DIVISION ASSETS IN HARAR ARE REQUIRED TO COUNTER ANY POTENTIAL
HOSTILITIES IN TFAI. IN SOUTHWEST , WHERE EPMG WOULD HAVE POTENTIAL
FOR LIMITED MILITARY OPERATIONS, BORDER IS QUIET, TROOP STRENGHT
MINIMAL, AND NO KNOWN PREPARATIONS BEING MADE FOR EXPANDED

OPERATIONS. IN ANY CASE, LOGISTICS FOR OTHER THAN SMALL OPERATIONS WOULD BE DIFFICULT SINCE ROAD SYSTEM PORR AND EPMG AIR ASSETS ALREADY OVERCOMMITTED. IN ADDIS ITSELF, CONINUED ACTIVITIES OF EPRP , PAST TRANSFERS OF POLICE TO ERITREA AND REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN MILITARY PRESENCE IN CAPITOL TO PROTECT GOVERNMENT ARUGUE AGAINST ANY LARGE SCALE MOVEMENT OF 1ST DIVISION ASSETS. IN SHORT, EPMG'S PRESENT OFFESNIVE MILITARY CAPABILIEIES ARE SEVERLY LIMITED, AND THIS SITUATION IS UNLIKELY TO CHANGE DURING NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.

3. EMBASSY HAS REPORTED RECENT GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENT TO TILL ALL GAS STATIONS ON ADDIS -GONDAR AND ADDIS-MEKELEROADS AND COLLECTING OF TENTS. IN ADDITION , WE HAVE HEARD OF PROBABLE MOVEMENT OF ARTILLAERY TO GONDAR AREA. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD REPORTS OF CALL-UP OF FORMER MILITARY PERSONNEL, PRESUMABLY TO BE SUED IN MILITARY SUPPORT ROLES.PLUS SPECULATION THAT "LARGE" NUMBERS OF MILITIA ARE GATHERING AROUND ADDIS (WE HAVE SEEN NONE, OR HAVE WE SEEN ANY EVIDENCE OF CONCENTRATIONS OF TRANSPORT SUCH AS OCCURED AT TIME OF RED MARCH LAST YEAR).

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES EPMG CURRENTLY REGARDS EDU AS BAST POTENTIAL TARGET FOR VARIETY OF REASONS INCLUGING LIKELY VIEW THAT EPRP THREAT IN ADDIS HAS BEEN REDUCED. EDU, UNLIKE ERITREANS OR SOMALI BACKED UNSURGENTS, COMMITTED TO OVERTHROW OF THIS GOVERNMENT. THEY ARE WEAKEST MILITARILY OF THE THREE, MOST ACCESSIBLE IN TERMS OF EPMG LOSISITCS, AND POSE A THREAT TO THE ANCIENT AMHARA CAPITOL OF GONDAR, LOSS OF WHICH WOULD HAVE HEAVY PSYCHOLIGICAL IMPACT AND ENCOURAGE ANTI-GOVERNMENT

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ELEMENTS IN ADDIS AND ELSEWHERE TO STEP UP THEIR ACTIVITIES.

5. BASED ON THE ABOVE, AS WELL AS IDEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS, IT APPEARS EPMG WILL ATTEMPT TO INCREASE ITS ACTIVITIES AGAINST EDU IN GONDAR ADMINISTRATIVE REGION AND TO LESSER EXTENT, IN TIGRE ADMINISTRATIVE REGION IN COMING WEEKS. IN GONDAR, PRIORITIES PROBABLY ARE :(A) ASSURE DEFENSE OF CITY OF GONDAR, (B) DESTRUCTION OF EDU FORCES ON GONDAR-METEMMA ROAD WITH OBJECTIVES OF RETAKING METEMMA AND PROVIDING SOME SUPPORT FOR DISSIDENT ANSARS IN THE AREA, (C) ATTEMPT TO RETAKE POSTS SOUTH OF THE TACAZZE RIVER ON THE GONDAR-AXUM ROAD TO MINIMIZE POSSIBILITY OF TPLF AND ERITREAN ASSISTANCE TO EDU. POSSIBLE SECOND PHASE WOULD BE JOINT MOVEMENT FROM MAKELLE AND THE TACAZZE TOWARDS AXUM AREA. WITH RESPECT TO REPORTED MOVEMENT OF ARTILLERY TO GONDAR AREA, ARTILLERY CAN BE USED TO GOOD EFFECT AGAINST EDU FORCES AS WELL AS DISCOURAGE SUDANESE INDIRECT FIRE SUPPORT FOR EDU. EMBASSY HAS ALSO HEARD RUMOR THAT TENTS NOW BEING COLLECTED ARE TO BE SUED FOR REFUGEES FROM AREA WEST OF GONDAR

WHICH WILL REPORTEDLY BECOME FREE FIRE ZONE.

6. UNTIL EPMG CAN BRING NEW FLAME UNITS INTO ORDER OF BATTLE AND EXPAND MILITIA, I WILL PROBABLY NOT BE ABLE TO FREE UP TROOPS TIED DOWN IN GARRISON DUTY AND TO MOUNT MAJOR OPERATIONS. THIS DOES NOT HOWEVER PRECLUDE, POSSIBILITY OF EFFECTIVE ACTION AGAINST RELATIVELY WEAK EDF FORCES IN GONDAR AREA. AS EPMG CAPABILITIES BEGIN TO RISE IN MID-YEAR, ITS POTENTIAL FOR STEPPED UP OPERATIONS IN ERITREA AND SOUTH WILL INCREASE. IN SHORT, NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS WILL BE OF CRITICAL MILITARY IMPORTANCE FOR EPMG AND IT CAN FORESTALL MAJOR MILITARY DISASTER IN ERITREA OF TFAI DURING THIS PERIOD, EPMG POSITION SHOULD THEN BE ON UPTURN. INTRODUCTION OF ANY FOREIGN FORCES, WHICH APPEARS UNLIKELY AT PRESENT IN OTHER THAN ADVISORY ROLES, WOULD OF COURSE IMPACT ON EPMG CAPABILITIES. IN ANY CASE, LIKELIHOOD OF EPMG "AGGRESSION" AGAINST SUDAN MINIMAL FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, MILITARY PLANS, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EPMG INTENTION RE SUDAN RE: KHARTOUM 1273, KHARTOUM 1344
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, PINS, ET, SU
To: STATE
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